

LETTER FROM DU QUOIN FEMALE SEMINARY

Gordon L. Corbett
2220 Boston Court
Indianapolis, IN
46208-3220

The following letter was sent by Rev. Gordon L. CORBETT who writes, "Some years ago my wife found in her uncle's attic a group of letters to and from her great grandmother, Hannah PLIMPTON. Her family lived in Sturbridge, Mass. Her father was a farmer and occasional teacher. He sent his daughter to Mount Holyoke College and she graduated from there in 1848. Mount Holyoke at that time was dedicated to training young women to be teachers. Miss PLIMPTON taught in West Haven, Conn. for a number of years, and then was recruited by Miss Eliza PAINE another MHC graduate, to come to DuQuoin, Ill. to teach in a new school which had just been started. She taught for one year and then returned to the East to try to raise money for the school...."

DuQuoin, Mar. 31, 1858

My Dear Miss PLIMPTON,

It is Wednesday and all are now engaged at their music or compositions. Our weekly prayer meeting which we now have the first hour Wednesday morning is once more through. I met here in the large parlor those who have more or less recently embraced the Christian hope, but have never yet made a public profession. Shall I give you their names:

Fannie AIKMAN of Marion
Ella WARD of Marion
Cynthia CALVERT of Marion
Nannie FAY of Seton
Ellen WALL of Seton
Lissie WRIGHT of Cairo
Addie WALLBRIDGE of Pulaski
Harriet ROSS of Vergennes
Sarah RICH of near Carbondale

Mary DAVID of DuQuoin
Viola DERBY of DuQuoin
Addie DERBY of DuQuoin
Harriet CAMPBELL of DuQuoin
Addie BURBANK of DuQuoin
Nancy McCLUER of DuQuoin
Martha CAMPBELL of DuQuoin
Anna ADAMS of DuQuoin
J. WILLIAMS of DuQuoin

Harriet MINOR, Rev. Mr. MINOR's daughter

Oscalia WOODS, Martha DAVID, Margaret HINCKLEY; Those would have been in this circle had they been at school in season. Margaret has the mumps.

Professors and those without hope met at school room: Julia WORTHAM, Harriet SMITH, Abbie SKINNER, Luelia BURBANK, Harriet JOHNSON. These are the five without hope. Do pray for them.

Names of Professors: Martha BIRD, Lissie LIPPINCOTT, Fannie HINCKLEY, Lissie WEEKS, Olive FULLER, Mary McFARLAND, Sophia CROSIER, Sarah HINCHCLIFF, Matilda WYLIE, Laura ENOCHS, Martha HAMILTON.

None have been here and gone this year, but three from this number., WYLIE, HAMILTON and ENOCHS. Martha BIRD will not be here next time---

has a school engaged. Primary department under Miss HARRIS at Richview. Sarah RICHART went yesterday to her school to teach. Mary WORTHAM and M. CROSIER are teaching. Lissie CROSIER is about uniting with the church. Several of our members will come forward probably at our next communion which I suppose will be in 3 weeks. I think several young men will also come forward then.

I presume from other correspondents you have learned of the interesting state of feeling in this community as well as in our school. George HINCKLEY, Dewitt CAMPBELL, Salem CAMPBELL, Leonard ROSS, Charles CHANDLER, Wm. HICKS, a Mr. ROBINSON, and perhaps others are among the number of hopeful converts.

We hope the interest is by no means diminishing. What a privilege to live and see such a day, and hear such glorious news from all parts of our country and the world. It is a good time to enter upon the life and labors of a foreign missionary. Allow me to congratulate you on your prospects. My prayers, best wishes and kindest feeling shall ever go with you.

Mrs. SAUNDERS showed me only your letter relating to business. The money for the boots I will send in this tho you did not say whether you could turn it any other way or not, and I am glad of the accommodation. Your large picture still hangs in the dining room where it used to; the two smaller ones adorn our small parlor here. I hope Mrs. S. and Mrs. B. to whom you have given them will allow them to remain here as long as possible. I hear nothing of Mr. GAMSBY's going home at present. I would love to have some of your handiwork to be preserved here so long as the Sem. lasts. You surely cannot think we wish to forget you, tho you said nothing of such memento. It is true you will live in the hearts and memory of many, but I have one request to make, and will send a dollar for the purpose, hoping you will have no objection to complying with it. It is that you will send me that Daguerreotype of you and myself. I think that should be preserved in the Seminary, and I will pay you anything you require for it. I have forgotten the price of it.

I hear that there is a box at the station and am expecting it to be brought down today. Presume it is the one from you. Many have been anxiously awaiting its arrival. Mr. WOOD brought in yesterday "a part of a book" in which I find a line to myself, etc. I shall probably not close this off till I can say that box is here. I am thankful for your encouragement that when on foreign shores you may remember us, and contribute to our curiosities.

My Dear Sister: Do set down our names, my name among your correspondents in America and as long as you live and labor do not cease to write us often. How much your letters may do to awaken a missionary spirit in those who may be here. I trust we may still feel that we are one in Christ and laboring in the same vineyard, tho in opposite corners. I had hoped you would longer remain identified with us and our enterprise, but the way is no doubt good. I thank the Lord and you for one year's labor here, for all our sweet conselling together. Do I need to assure you that I shall ever think and speak of you with the kindest emotions--- that your memory will be cherished in this Institution, and your name be often breathed in our petitions at the Throne. In our missionary meetings and efforts, we shall certainly feel a deeper interest from the fact that one of our number of teachers has left us for foreign shores. May you ever have the presence of your dear Savior. Do give my kind regards to your chosen one. Can you not in some way secure the Miss'y Herald be sent to

CORBETT: Letter From DuQuoin Female Seminary (cont).

us permanently and gratuitously? Do write me more fully of your plans. And do tell me that you do not remember ought against me more.

Your last letter to Mrs. S. made me feel sad as you did not even allude to myself or my sister. I feared you still cherished unkind but mistaken feelings which I cannot account for. If so, I do not say I once loved you, but I love you still and would that every unhappy suspicion were hushed, every barrier removed, and we as sisters still.

May I not subscribe myself your loving,

Sister Eliza

I have just discovered another note in your book of the Ind. being sent, etc. It does come, but not the HERALD. We should certainly like to have them continued. Did you mean to have this acknowledged to you or to those who send and to whom, or will you give them our thanks.

I recently came across the enclosed letter which I think may have been overlooked among my papers for a month. Will you excuse? I intended to write a line and send it out, but our hands and hearts have been full as you may imagine. I hope it is not anything that will be seriously affected by the delay for which I am very sorry.

* * * * *